

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 956

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINS ET SF WA RH

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN FONMIN PRESS CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: DURING WIDE-RANGING PRESS CONFERENCE SEPT. 15, FONMIN KIFLE WODAJO DEALT WITH WIDELY VARIED ASPECTS OF CURRENT ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY. KIFLE WAS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN ERITREAN SECESSIONIST ACTIVITIES AND THREATENED TO TAKE INITIATIVES WITHIN OAU TO BRING TO AFRICAN ATTENTION INTERFERENCE OF CERTAIN ARAB COUNTRIES IN MATTER INVOLVING SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HE WAS PESSIMISTIC ON CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF KISSINGER MISSION TO SOUTHERN AFRICA AND FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN NAMIBIA. HE ALSO SPELLED OUT NATURE OF ETHIOPIA'S FOREIGN POLICY OF "POSITIVE ALIGNMENT."

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END SUMMARY.

1. KIFLE CHARACTERIZED OVERALL ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY AS ONE OF "DYNAMIC AND POSITIVE NON-ALIGNMENT." THIS HE DEFINED AS MEANING THAT PMAC WILL ENDEAVOR TO COORDINATE THE EFFORTS OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM AND IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO CREATE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER. KIFLE STATED THAT POST IMBALANCE WHEREBY ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS HISTORICALLY WERE WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL HAVE TO BE REDRESSED BY ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. AT SAME TIME ETHIOPIA PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH ALL COUNTRIES WILLING TO RESPECT HER ASPIRATIONS AND CHOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY COURSE. HE SAID ETHIOPIA WILL COOPERATE WITH ALL WHO ACCEPT BASIS OF EQUALITY, NON-ALIGNMENT AND RESPECT FOR ETHIOPIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE, BUT WOULD GIVE SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, WITH WHOM LARGER MEASURE OF IDENTITY OF INTERESTS EXISTED.

2. REFERRING TO FUTURE COMPLEXION OF ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM, HE SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW, WHATEVER SYSTEM PEOPLE MIGHT ULTIMATELY WISH TO ADOPT--AND CHOICE MUST BE LEFT TO PEOPLE OF AFRICA--MUST BE UNDERSTANDABLE TO POPULATION, FUNCTIONAL, AND CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING ITSELF TO THEIR NEEDS. HE CONSIDERED WHOLESALE IMPORTATION OF ANY SYSTEM IMPRACTICAL, SINCE SYSTEM MUST BE ADAPTED TO OWN CULTURAL TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REFLECT PECULIAR GENIUS OF THAT PEOPLE. HE SAW ASSERTION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AS CLOSELY LINKED TO SYSTEM OF ACQUIRING FULL RIGHT TO ONE'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND TO CAPABILITY OF AFRICAN PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO THEIR OWN NEEDS IN WAY THAT THEY CHOOSE.

3. KIFLE WAS ASKED TO ELABORATE ON PMAC CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTI'S REFERENCE IN 12 SEPT. REVOLUTION DAY SPEECH (ADDIS ABABA 10272 NOTAL) TO OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT IN ERITREAN INSURRECTION. HE IDENTIFIED IRAQ, SYRIA, KUWAIT AND TUNISIA AS HAVING OFFICIALLY INDICATED CONTINUED SUPPORT OF SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, BUT ADDED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAD NOT IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WERE ALSO INTERFERING IN ERITREA. THIS INTERFERENCE INCLUDED PROVISION OF MATERIAL AND WEAPONS, AS WELL AS PROVIDING TRAINING TO ELF MEMBERS. HE WARNED THAT IF THOSE COUNTRIES CONTINUED THEIR INTERFERENCE, ETHIOPIA MIGHT TAKE INITIATIVES WITHIN THE OAU TO BRING THESE UNFRIENDLY ACTIVITIES TO ATTENTION OF OTHER AFRICAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTRIES. HE CLAIMED THAT ERITREAN SITUATION WAS BEING USED BY OTHERS TO WEAKEN REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN ETHIOPIA AND SINGLED OUT SUDANESE PRESIDENT NIMEIRI FOR HIS HELPFUL ROLE IN ATTEMPTING TO FACILITATE EPMG DIALOGUE WITH ERITREAN SECESSIONIST FORCES.

4. KIFLE INDICATED THAT SOME WESTERN CAPITALS WERE CONTINUING TO HELP COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENTS SUCH AS ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION(EDU). HE WARNED SUCH COUNTRIES AGAIN THAT GOOD

RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA WERE NOT POSSIBLE AT SAME TIME THEY GIVING FREEDOM OF ACTION TO ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES INIMICAL TO ETHIOPIAN INTEREST.

5. ADDRESSING NAMIBIA, KIFLE CLAIMED THAT PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA HAVE CONCLUDED THAT ONLY ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE LAY THROUGH ARMED STRUGGLE. AFRICAN PEOPLE AND OAU HAVE ACCEPTED THIS CHOICE AND HAVE RECOGNIZED URGENT NEED TO PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO NAMIBIA REPRESENTED BY SWAPO. ALTHOUGH DETRACTORS OF LIBERATION STRUGGLE WERE CONSTANTLY WARNING AGAINST PROSPECT OF SOCIALIST FORCES APPROACHING THRESHOLD OF SOUTH AFRICA, IN HIS VIEW NEITHER NAMIBIA NOR ZIMBABWE COULD CONDITION ITS INDEPENDENCE BY CONFINING ITSELF EXCLUSIVELY TO THIS OR THAT ONE POSSIBLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM.

6. ASKED WHETHER HE EXPECTED POSITIVE RESULTS OUT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S AFRICAN TOUR, KIFLE SAID THAT PRINCIPAL TRADING PARTNERS OF SOUTH AFRICA WITH ECONOMIC INFLUENCE AND LARGE INVESTMENTS IN THAT COUNTRY HAD REFUSED TO DATE TO HEED AFRICAN AND UNGA CALLS FOR MANDATORY ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AND SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. SECRETARY'S EFFORT WAS IN KEEPING WITH UN AND OAU REQUEST TO BRING PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA AND TO EXERT US ECONOMIC INFLUENCE. HOWEVER, BARRING ANY INDICATIONS THAT US PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS, HE DID NOT FEEL THAT US EFFORT COULD BE PRODUCTIVE.

7. COMMENT: KIFLE'S PRESS CONFERENCE COMES ON EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE TO ATTEND UNGA SESSION AND MAY BE CONSIDERED INDICATIVE OF POSITIONS EPMG WILL TAKE IN NEW YORK. BOTH HIS OPENING REMARKS AND REPORTED REPLIES TO QUESTIONS WERE RESTRAINED, STATESMANLIKE AND MODERATE IN TONE. WHOLE RANGE OF TOPICS HE WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT HAS BEEN QUITE SOME TIME SINCE ETHIOPIA WAS WILLING TO STATE ITS VIEW ON SO MANY ISSUES PUBLICLY IN ETHIOPIA. ON DOMESTIC SIDE, HIS REMARKS REGARDING ETHIOPIA'S ROAD TO SOCIALISM (PARA 2) WOULD INDICATE LAST WORD HAS NOT BEEN SPOKEN AND THAT ETHIOPIA CASTING ABOUT FOR ITS OWN PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS WITHIN SOCIALIST FRAMEWORK IT HAS ADOPTED FOR ITSELF. HIS INCREASING IRRITATION WITH FOREIGN SUPPORTERS OF ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS IS OBVIOUS AND HE MAY ACTIVELY PURSUE THIS TOPIC WHILE IN NEW YORK. END COMMENT.

8. FURTHER DETAILS ON INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS LISTED ABOVE, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON FORMER SPANISH SAHARA AND SOUTH YEMEN, WILL BE PROVIDED BY SEPTELS TO APPROPRIATE ADDRESSEES. TIENKEN

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